

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 14, 2011

Tunisian gov't fails to quell protests

BY SETH GALINSKY

Two weeks after mass demonstrations forced Tunisia's dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and many of his relatives to flee the country, the acting government has been unsuccessful in quelling protests by working people and youth.

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announced a new reshuffling of the cabinet on January 27, removing the hated foreign, defense, and interior ministers. At least three former officials of Ben Ali's regime still hold key roles in the "transitional" government, including Ghannouchi, interim president Foued Mebazaa, and foreign minister Ahmed Ounais. Ghannouchi has pledged new elections in six months.

The government previously announced a series of measures aimed at placating protesters: cheaper transport fees and a small monthly stipend for unemployed college graduates; compensation for families of those killed by the cops during the uprising; and dissolution of the agency that was in charge of censorship.

The Spanish daily *El País* reports that tens of thousands demonstrated January 26 in the port city of Sfax

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Mass protests shake dictatorship in Egypt

Economic, social crisis fuels upheaval



Sipa via AP Images

More than 100,000 demonstrate January 29 in Cairo's central Tahrir Square demanding resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, hours after he fired cabinet but refused to step down.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

February 2—Fueled by unemployment and high prices resulting from the world capitalist crisis, and a long history of police brutality and suppression of rights, massive antigovernment demonstrations have exploded in Egypt demanding the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak.

The power of these mobilizations is bringing down Washington's most valued ally in its exploitation of work-

ing people in the Middle East, outside of the government of Israel. At the same time, space is opening up for Egyptian workers and farmers to organize and enter into politics in their own class interests.

Egypt is the fourth largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world, after Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Israel. It is also of strategic importance both in military and economic terms, since Cairo controls the Suez Canal, through which 8 percent of the world's ships pass, bearing much of the oil fueling the imperialist world.

The Egyptian population is the largest of any Arabic-speaking coun-

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States fire workers, cut wages, benefits

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Public workers across the United States face mounting layoffs and cuts in wages and social benefits as state governments seek to reduce billion-dollar budget deficits. One option under discussion would allow states to declare bankruptcy, under which union contracts could more easily be declared null and void.

Some 44 states and the District of Columbia are projecting budget shortfalls totaling \$125 billion for fiscal year 2012, which begins this July, according to a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. This figure is expected to keep rising. "At least 22 states are already projecting shortfalls totaling \$70 billion more for fiscal year 2013," the report notes.

Unlike the federal government, states cannot print money to cover these deficits. Federal "stimulus" funds given to states and cities over the past couple of years that postponed some layoffs and cutbacks are now ending. Nearly 400,000 jobs of state and city workers have been eliminated nationwide since August 2008.

In Texas, the government plans to cut another 9,300 jobs this year; in Georgia, 14,000 more are on the chopping block. New York governor Andrew Cuomo projects laying off more than 10,000 workers and freezing wages. California's and Nevada's governors are demanding pay cuts of

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Campaign to win long-term readers is picking up steam

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The drive to win 400 long-term readers to the *Militant* by February 15 is picking up steam. Supporters of the socialist newsweekly around the world are getting a positive response as they reach out to recent subscribers and ask them to renew.

At the end of week two of the campaign total quotas add up to 384, an increase of 23 from last week. So far local areas have sent in 165 names of individuals who signed up for another three, six, or 12 months of the paper (see chart on page 4).

In addition, more than three dozen people have signed up for three-month introductory subscriptions in the past week. With some extra effort supporters of the *Militant* can often convince a new reader who is interested in working-class politics to sign up for a six-month subscription.

Around the world *Militant* supporters are finding interest in the paper at rallies in solidarity with the demonstrations in Egypt. Both single copies and introductory subscriptions have

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Canada: Steelworkers rally to defend pensions



Militant/John Steele

HAMILTON, Ontario—More than 5,000 people demonstrated here January 29 in support of 900 workers locked out by U.S. Steel (formerly Stelco) Nov. 7, 2010. The workers are fighting to defend their right to retirement benefits. The U.S. Steel bosses want to eliminate the cost-of-living index in pensions of more than 9,000 Stelco retirees and widows in the Hamilton area, and force new hires to accept a pension without defined benefits, tying their pensions to the ups and downs of the stock market. Organized by United Steelworkers Local 1005 and the Ontario Federation of Labour, 60 busloads of unionists joined the action.

—JOHN STEELE

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Memphis peace group target of FBI intrusion

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Local cops and the FBI turned out in force at a January 25 meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, called as part of nationwide actions to oppose FBI raids and grand jury subpoenas against anti-war activists in the Midwest.

The Mid-South Peace and Justice Center (MSPJC) in Memphis had called on people to come to its office January 25 to fill out Freedom of Information Act forms requesting their FBI files. More than a dozen showed up. MSPJC states its goal is to “realize social justice through nonviolent action.”

Three men identifying themselves as from the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force also showed up. Brad Watkins, MSPJC organizing coordinator, said, “They claimed that they were there to alert us to antiwar activists planning a protest outside our building. I informed them that we were a pro-peace organization.” The agents left.

Next, eight police vehicles, including SWAT SUVs, arrived. The cops said they were there to “keep the peace at a demonstration they had been alerted to,” reported Watkins. When the activists responded that their presence seemed aimed at intimidation, the cops claimed they had received a call from “a concerned citizen.”

Interviewed by the Memphis daily the *Commercial Appeal*, both the FBI and police officials said they had received no threats against the MSPJC, but such visits were routine law enforcement. FBI spokesman Joel Siskovic told the paper there was a concern about violence “against people

expressing their opinions.”

According to the *Appeal*, it was only in December of last year that the Memphis Police Department officially banned political surveillance after a court order 32 years earlier to do so. The 1978 consent decree prohibited electronic and covert surveillance, maintaining of files on someone’s political views, and “any law enforcement activities which interfere with any person’s rights protected by the First Amendment.”

On Dec. 20, 2010, the police finally distributed a memo to this effect to all employees, a day after the *Commercial Appeal* ran a story questioning whether the department was obeying the order.

In a series of recent articles, the *Appeal* has described the long history of FBI and police spying in Memphis against trade unions, socialists, Black rights fighters, and opponents of U.S. wars.

The Memphis FBI received national attention in 1954 when its agents arrested Junius Scales, a Communist Party (CP) leader, on charges of violat-



Picket line in San Francisco Sept. 28, 2010, protests raids by FBI earlier that month against antiwar activists. When Memphis peace group organized another solidarity action January 25, cops and FBI showed up to harass participants.

ing the Smith Act. Scales was jailed for being a member of the CP. The Smith Act made that a felony, on the claim that the party advocated the “violent overthrow” of the government.

Government spying stepped up during the civil rights movement, the

movement against the Vietnam War, and a militant strike by Memphis sanitation workers in 1968. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis that year on April 4 while participating in solidarity actions in support of the strike.

Seattle jury: Cop who shot man was not threatened

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—An eight-member inquest jury delivered its decision January 20 in the case of Seattle cop Ian Birk, who fatally shot John Williams last August 30. Four inquest jurors concluded Birk was not facing an “imminent threat” when he jumped out of his squad car and fired at Williams. Three jurors said the answer was unknown. Only one juror agreed

Birk was in danger.

Williams, 50, was a member of the Ditidaht Tribe, part of the Nuuchah-Nulth First Nations in British Columbia and well known locally as a wood-carver. Police initially claimed Birk saw Williams with a knife, ordered him to drop it, and then fired when Williams turned and moved toward him. Witnesses said Williams, who had a hearing loss, likely never heard the cop and never posed a threat.

The four jurors also concluded Williams did not have enough time to respond to Birk’s command to put down his small carving knife. Birk opened fire with his semiautomatic four seconds later. An autopsy report noted all four bullets hit Williams in his right side, indicating he was not facing Birk when shot. After the shooting, Williams’s knife was found, folded closed.

Protesters against the shooting demonstrated outside the King County courthouse January 10, the morning before the inquest, again at the noon break,

and at the end of testimony that day.

The *Seattle Times* reported Fern Renville, a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of South Dakota and one of the many supporters of Williams’s family at the inquest, said she was shocked by video of backup officers who handcuffed Williams after the shooting “instead of offering medical aid.”

An earlier Seattle police department review found the shooting to be unjustified, but the King County prosecuting attorney’s office called for the fact-finding inquest before deciding whether to file criminal charges against the cop.

The King County District Court judge overseeing the inquest would not allow the department’s findings to be admitted as evidence.

After the inquest, Williams’s family members delivered a letter and petition asking the county prosecutor to file murder charges against Birk. Prosecutors are expected to make a decision on this in about a month.

THE MILITANT

Workers in Tunisia oust dictator!

Workers and youth in Tunisia forced dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to flee. They continue to take to the streets demanding ouster of the new government tied to him. Workers are now fighting for jobs and political rights. Subscribe to the ‘Militant’ and follow events in Africa and the Middle East.



Workers and youth demonstrate January 24 in Tunis, demanding democratic rights and resignation of ministers tied to dictator.

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Anti-immigrant bill is ‘step back on civil rights’

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON
AND JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Nebraska—More than 300 people demonstrated on the steps of the state capitol here January 27 to oppose a proposed anti-immigrant bill. The Illegal Immigration Enforcement Act (LB 48) was introduced in early January by Charles Janssen, a state senator from Fremont.

Voters in the town of Fremont, with a population of 25,000, approved a similar anti-immigrant law in June 2010 making it a crime to harbor, hire, or rent to undocumented immigrants. The measure gives local police authorization to ask people for their immigration papers.

The Fremont law was supposed to take effect last July but the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund sued to get it thrown out, contending that the ordinance is discriminatory and contrary to state law.

Shortly after the suit was filed, the Fremont City Council voted to suspend the ordinance until the case is resolved. A hearing is set in federal court for March 15.

Like Arizona’s SB 1070 law, Nebraska’s LB 48 would require cops to check the immigration status of people they stop if they suspect they are undocumented. Anyone who can’t prove they are in the United States legally could be turned over to immigration authorities for deportation.

Close to half the participants at the capitol demonstration were students from Nebraska colleges and high schools. Jane Pearson, 19, a student at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln said, “Senator Janssen and others like him seem to want to divide people instead of what this rally is about which is unity, we need to build more such rallies and educate people against discrimination.”

“This is not a one-color thing, it’s everybody’s thing,” said Leslie Brown, 56, a home health-care worker. “They got us pointing at each other as ‘them’

being the problem. But Blacks and Latinos are in the same boat.”

Alexander Gibilisco, representing the Mexican American Student Association at the University of Nebraska here, told the rally, “We are human beings and want to be treated as such.”

“LB 48 would represent a green light to discrimination and a step backwards for civil rights in Nebraska,” said speaker Leroy Stokes, president of the Lincoln NAACP.

Others speaking against the anti-immigrant bill included representatives from the Native American Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, American G.I. Forum, the Anti-Defamation League, and local churches.



Militant/Rebecca Williamson
Demonstration at Nebraska State Capitol January 27 against anti-immigrant bill. NAACP speaker at event said legislation would be “green light for discrimination.”

Chicago cop sentenced for lying about torture

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Jon Burge, convicted last June on federal perjury and obstruction of justice charges for lying during a civil lawsuit about torturing suspects, was sentenced to four and a half years in prison January 21. Burge, a former Chicago police lieutenant, was ordered to report to prison on March 16 to begin serving his sentence.

Less than a week after the sentencing, a police pension board in a 4-to-4 tie voted that Burge will continue to receive his \$3,039-a-month pension

while in prison. Burge began receiving the pension in 1997, four years after he was fired for the torture and abuse of Andrew Wilson.

Burge ran a gang of detectives known as the “Midnight Crew” that for decades used beatings with pistols, suffocations with plastic bags, electric shocks to genitals and other body parts, and further methods of torture to force confessions from suspects. Most of those abused and framed up by Burge and his crew were Black males.

“This is a significant step in the

process to bring some justice to all of those people who were tortured,” Flint Taylor, an attorney who has represented many of the men brutalized by Burge, told the media following the sentencing hearing.

According to the Illinois Coalition against Torture, 24 prisoners who are believed to have been tortured at the hands of Burge’s police gang remain in jail.

During the two-day hearing torture victims and their family members, and the many fighters who have been part of the decades-long struggle to convict and jail Burge, packed the courtroom.

Anthony Holmes told the court, “That man tried to kill me.” Holmes testified that Burge shocked him three times and then put a gun to his head saying, “I’ll blow your black head off.” Under that pressure Holmes signed a murder confession that led to a 30-year prison sentence.

Appealing to federal judge Joan Lefkow, Burge said that he was sorry for bringing “disrepute” on the Chicago police department. He never apologized to any of the men or their families. In response to Burge saying that he was “deeply sorry” and that he was a “broken man,” Judge Lefkow told Burge she did not believe him. Lefkow doubled the sentencing guidelines in pronouncing the four-and-a-half-year prison term.

Mark Clements, a torture victim and a leader of the fight to convict and jail Burge, told the *Militant* that this is “a victory in the sense a lot of hard work went into bringing down Jon Burge. The judge gave him an extended sentence because he refused to acknowledge his wrongs.”

“I believe that Jon Burge receiving his pension is an insult to all humanity,” continued Clements. “It is an outrage that he only received a four-year sentence, but it is a victory that he even received a sentence.”

Miami schools skirt class-size law with ‘virtual’ classrooms

BY BERNIE SENTER

MIAMI—For 7,000 students at Miami-Dade County public schools, their English, math, or history teacher is a computer.

Public schools in Florida have turned to virtual classrooms to get around a law limiting the number of students allowed in classrooms. The law does not cover “e-learning labs,” as these virtual classrooms are euphemistically called. “There’s no way to beat the class-size mandate without it,” said Miami Beach High School assistant principal Jodi Robins.

What about hiring more teachers? Not a chance.

Students take their online courses either at home or in school. A “facilitator” may be available in the school to deal with technical problems.

Florida governor Richard Scott recently appointed Michelle Rhee as “informal education adviser.” Until recently Rhee was the school chancellor of Washington, D.C.

During Rhee’s tenure, “she closed schools by the dozens, fired teachers by the hundreds and spent more than two years negotiating a labor contract” while “establishing a new performance-pay system that ties compensation to growth on student test scores,” reported the *Washington Post*.

Of the 445 Miami Beach High School students taking online courses in her school, “none of them want to be there,” said sophomore Alix Braun. “For virtual education you have to be really self-motivated. This was not

something they chose to do, and it’s a really bad situation to be put in because it is not your choice.”

“The way our state is dealing with class size is nearly criminal,” Chris Kirchner, an English teacher at Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami, told the *New York Times*. “They’re standardizing in the worst possible way, which is evident in virtual classes.”

Susan Kranitz is a virtual teacher in Lakeland, located in central Florida, with 150 students in her online class. “I can kind of set my own hours,” she said. “I determine when I am going to answer my emails and do the grading, which I do every day, but then as far as the students, they have my office number and my cell phone number. They can call me or text me at any time.”

Julie Durrance, a manager of the e-learning lab program in Miami-Dade, predicts that virtual classrooms will grow to include more grade levels.

“I truly believe this will be an option for many districts across the state,” she said. “I think we just hit the tip of the iceberg.”

— CALENDAR —

Hear: Steve Clark, editor of Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

Mon. Feb. 14 —7 p.m.
Creighton University,
Omaha
Harper Bldg., Room 3023
Sponsor: Multicultural Affairs
For info call: (402) 280-2469

Tues. Feb. 15— 1 p.m.
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—**MILITANT
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CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles
Behind California’s ‘Budget Crisis’: Rulers Target Public Workers, Social Wage.
Speaker: Eleanor García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council. Fri., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 4025 S Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

San Francisco
Protest Deepening Attacks on Working People by California State Government!
Fri., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA
Miami
The American Civil War: A Victory for Working People. Fri., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 719 NE 79th St. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

IOWA
Des Moines
Workers Rights vs. the Secret Police. Sat., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel. (515) 225-1707.

Iran Book News Agency reviews ‘Workers Power’

The following is a January 18 review, titled “Accomplishments of Malcolm X from the point of view of a socialist,” by the semiofficial Iran Book News Agency (IBNA). It reviews the first volume of the Farsi translation of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. The book was published by Pathfinder Press in English in 2009, and in Spanish and French in early 2010. This opening volume of the Farsi translation includes the introduction plus part IV of the book, “Ending the Dictatorship of Capital, Ending Racism.”

In recent months, IBNA has also featured reviews of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters and *Washington’s 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation* by Larry Seigle. All three of the Farsi books are published by Talaye Porsoo.



January 18, 2011—The socialist author of the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* uses Malcolm X, Muslim leader of American Black fighters, as a pretext to authenticate socialism.

According to the Iran Book News Agency (IBNA), Jack Barnes, the author of the book, is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. In this book, above all, he relates the issues raised in an interview he conducted with Malcolm X in 1965 for the *Young Socialist* magazine.

This book is about the class struggle in the United States in the last century and half, from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction until today.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power is a book about why the revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class, millions strong, is necessary and why and how the new state power provides the working class the mightiest weapon possible to wage the ongoing battle to end Black oppression and every form of exploitation and human degradation inherited from millennia of class-divided society.

The book actually takes up the last year of Malcolm X’s life, and how he became the face and the authentic voice of the coming American revolution. Barnes, who entertains the hope of a



Militant/Mark Gamar

Supporters of *Militant* sell *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at labor protest in Paris last October. Review by Iranian Book News Agency states book is about “why the revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class, millions strong, is necessary.”

great revolution in America, views Malcolm X with admiration. Because Malcolm X also spoke of transformation and revolution, especially in American society.

In fact the writer of the book and his comrades, like Steve Clark and Mary-Alice Waters, remain steadfast to the vision of a revolution taking place in America. They are socialists who interpret, to the extent possible, every topic

or political event from a socialist point of view.

In a section of the introduction the author writes, “Drawing lessons from a century and half of struggle, this book helps us understand why it is the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class that will make possible the final battle for Black freedom—and open the way to a world based not on exploitation, violence, and racism, but human solidarity.”

Malcolm X, leader of the Black struggle in America who adopted the religion of Islam, also spoke of the necessity of revolution and transformation. He always assailed those possessing power and capital for violating the rights of Black people. So his goals were to some extent similar to those of socialists. But it remains to be seen whether the starting point for these goals are also similar or not.

Studying the views of the socialists reinforces this notion in the reader that, because of the relative defeat of this ideology in the past decades in the domain of action and domination of imperialism, they try to clutch at everything to authenticate their ideas.

The first edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, translated by Afsheen Sadraie, has been published by Talaye Porsoo in 163 pages with a run of 1,000 copies. The price is 45,000 rials [US\$4.50].

Campaign to win long-term readers picks up

Continued from front page

been sold to those who want to read the truth about the ouster of the dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and the ongoing struggle to overthrow Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

Those who value the paper for its reporting on working-class struggles around the world are encouraged to participate by renewing and helping to win others to subscribe.

New subscribers can contact a distributor in their area, listed on page 10, and ask them to come visit for a discussion. Supporters of the *Militant* also always bring with them a good stock of books on socialism and the

struggle for workers power.

Below are some reports from local areas that give a picture of the opportunities to win long-term readers.



Many of the subscribers we are contacting are inspired by the workers’ revolt in Tunisia and Egypt and want to discuss politics.

Logan Evans, one of two students at Western Washington University in Bellingham who decided to renew, said, “The media sources like the BBC say the dictators provide stability but I like the *Militant*’s articles that tell the other side and take the side of the workers.”

At a protest in Yakima, Washington, January 25 to call for the release of immigrant workers arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a former subscriber and a new subscriber signed up.

—Mary Martin
Seattle

Workers who read the *Militant* appreciate its class bias in favor of the working class. A team in New York contacted subscribers and talked to a woman factory worker in the Bronx who said she was about to send in her renewal. The team offered to come by and pick it up. When they did, they were invited in by the woman and her husband, a bus driver.

She explained she reads every article in the *Militant* in Spanish. “It gets right to the point,” she said. She has been working at her current job, where there is no union, for six years and makes only \$7.25 per hour. Her husband said he is better paid but can’t get 40 hours work a week.

The couple also looked over several books the team had brought. The woman wanted to buy *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, but her husband was more interested in *Is Socialist Revolu-*

tion in the U.S. Possible? They finally decided to buy both in addition to renewing for six months.

—Cindy Jaquith
New York

Norma Peoples, a union painter who renewed her subscription for six months last week and bought several Pathfinder books, met with distributors of the *Militant* again this week to buy a six-month subscription for her brother, who works in a foundry. She also ordered six copies of *Blacks in America’s Wars* for friends.

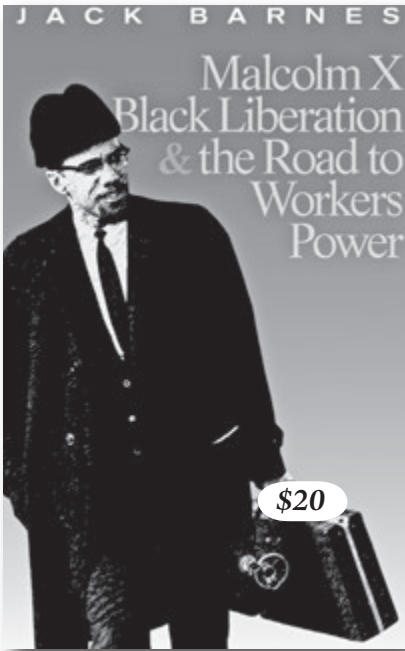
Socialists who work at Sky Chefs and a local foundry are following up with coworkers this week to secure renewals as well.

—Frank Forrestal
Twin Cities, Minnesota

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”



See distributors on page 10 or order from
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Philadelphia	25	6	24%
Total U.S.	312	131	42%
United Kingdom	20	12	60%
Canada	20	9	45%
New Zealand	15	8	53%
Australia	17	5	29%
Total	384	165	41%
Should be	400	200	50%

Locked-out Honeywell workers fight for safety

BY JOHN HAWKINS

METROPOLIS, Illinois—More than 150 people came to a town hall meeting here January 26 to discuss the impact of Honeywell's seven-month-old lockout against workers at its uranium conversion facility here.

In a picture projected on a large screen at the front of the room, a cloud floated above the Honeywell plant, beyond the reach of water sprays designed to suppress the deadly hydrogen fluoride gases.

"If that cloud had traveled toward town," United Steelworkers Local 7-669 president Darrell Lillie explained, "it could have impacted the entire population of Metropolis."

Hydrogen fluoride is only one of several hazardous chemicals used at the Metropolis plant to convert uranium into uranium hexafluoride (UF₆)—itself toxic and radioactive—a stage in the process of enriching uranium for nuclear power and weapons production.

The December 22 gas release Lillie described was the second major incident at the plant since "replacement workers" began running the operation with management last June.

"By Honeywell's admission the release lasted over an hour," Lillie reported. "The water suppression sprays were on for two hours. If they're on for 20 minutes water accumulates in the parking lot or floods the plant. Neither one happened that day. So where did the contaminated water go? It went into the river."

On September 5, one day after the replacement workers started up core production at the facility, a hydrogen explosion rocked the plant. While company officials denied it, the Nu-

clear Regulatory Commission later confirmed there was indeed a hydrogen blast.

"We take pride in keeping this community safe," said Lillie. "We are the watchdog in that facility."

In his presentation to the meeting, Lillie reviewed the issues involved in the lockout and answered a long list of charges made by the company against the union.

Honeywell says that its lockout was prompted by the union's refusal to negotiate and unwillingness to give the company time to reach a settlement. Lillie described the union's careful preparation for a possible labor dispute, including meeting with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and drawing up a plan that would give the company 30 days' notice before any action was taken in order to ensure an orderly shutdown of the facility.

Honeywell is demanding many concessions, from contracting out work to cuts in medical and pension benefits for new hires. But at the top of the list for union members, Lillie stated, is the reckless attitude the company has adopted on safety.

A booklet prepared by the union and available at the meeting, *Communities at Risk*, describes Honeywell's attack on safety provisions at the plant.

In 2002, at the union's initiative, the Triangle of Prevention (TOP) program was initiated. Through the program, which included increased safety training and involvement of workers in enforcing safe working conditions, workers noted major improvements. In 2008 Honeywell scrapped the program and "implemented new procedures that focused mainly on punishing employees for alleged safety violations," the booklet says.

Howard Cook, a union member, stated, "What we've had before were small leaks. We caught them and suppressed them before they got anywhere near" as large as recent ones.

"It's not a matter of what's going

N.Y. union strikes over company's 'disrespect'



Union members at the Momentive Performance Materials plant in Waterford, New York, walked off the job for two days January 13-14. The action was taken over a 30-day suspension given to a union member for a supposed safety violation.

The union chose to strike because of how the company treats the workers, IUE-CWA Local 81359 president Dominick Patrignani told the press. He said the union tried to overturn the suspension through normal procedures but was rebuffed by the company. "We exhausted . . . the grievance process. This is our right to strike," he said.

Workers at Momentive Performance, which makes adhesives and sealants, have been in a bitter dispute with the company for the past two years after management restructured the firm and forced a pay cut of as much as 50 percent on some 400 unionized workers.

Management refused to budge on reversing the suspension. Describing the action taken by the union against the company, Patrignani said, "It was the principle behind it, the punishment was unjust. They're totally disrespectful to the workforce."

—PAUL MAILHOT

to happen," said Metropolis resident Fran Long, "It's a matter of when. I have a well. I don't have city water. If Honeywell's discharging stuff into the river it's going to come up sooner or later in my water."

Many of those in attendance expressed outrage at Honeywell's proposal to encapsulate the sediment ponds it maintains on the plant grounds. The company's proposal calls for dumping tons of concrete into the ponds and leaving the solidified results in the ground.

"The only way I ever know what's going on is from all of you," said Lor-

ri Jones to the union members in the audience. Her remarks of solidarity reflected the sentiment of the meeting. "You guys are heroes."

"I know you all are fighting for your livelihoods. I know you've got a lot on the line. If there's anything we can do to help you, I'm right there with you."

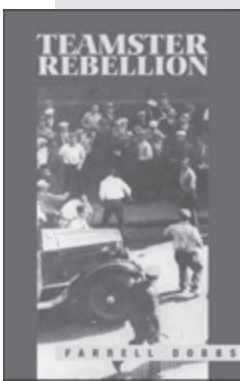
Contributions are welcome. Make checks payable to USW Local 7-669, PO Box 601, Metropolis, IL 62960. E-mail: admin@usw7-669.com

Betsy Farley contributed to this article.

Teamster Rebellion

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by a central leader.

First of a four-volume series on the class-struggle leadership of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement and pointed the road toward independent labor political action. \$19



Others in the series:

Teamster Power
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Teamster Bureaucracy

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 14, 1986

The central theme of President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union address was clear. The president called for a whopping 11.9 percent increase in military expenses and a big cut in spending for social programs.

Reagan spotlighted the U.S. government's war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government. "Surely no issue is more important for peace in our own hemisphere, for the protection of our vital interests—than to achieve democracy in Nicaragua."

Reagan's view is summed up by his assertion that "the United States is the economic miracle, the model to which the world once again turns."

According to government figures, more than 9 million workers are either seeking jobs or have given up looking.

The president's budget calls for slashing \$70 billion in the next five years from the already inadequate Medicare and Medicaid programs.



February 13, 1961

The scandalous state of medical care in this country was pointed up again when a resolution was introduced in the New York State Legislature Feb. 1 calling for an investigation of the Blue Cross hospital plan. At issue is the sky-high rates charged by Blue Cross and the juicy salaries and bonuses that the officers of the plan vote themselves.

In the past three years the State Insurance Commission has granted Blue Cross three whopping rate increases. These increases have jumped Blue Cross rates by 105 percent.

Other aspects of the disgraceful medical situation in the country are summed up in revelations about conditions at New York's municipal Harlem Hospital. Two women patients died the previous month for lack of proper medical care.

Such deaths are "not an uncommon occurrence," conceded Dr. Canute Bernard, director of the hospital's house staff council.



February 15, 1936

The A. F. of L. "will not tolerate within it an organization challenging the supremacy of the parent body." This ultimatum against the Committee for Industrial Organization, William Green delivered in person to the United Mine Workers convention.

In the answer given, the seventeen hundred delegates voted unanimously to support the Committee for Industrial Organization and to support its policy of industrial unionism. They voted authorization to the officers to withhold per-capita tax payments to the A. F. of L. should such action be necessary.

This was the high point of a remarkable convention. It was known in advance that its decisions would have an important bearing upon the outcome of the present conflict in the A. F. of L. over the industrial union issue. The convention therefore, received the undivided attention from all sections of the labor movement.

Volunteers get Pathfinder books in stores, libraries

BY THERESA KENDRICK

Pathfinder volunteers who place Pathfinder titles in bookstores and libraries began a new North American-wide sales effort February 1 to get 105 orders by June 9. This campaign follows two highly successful drives in 2010 centered on Pathfinder's new title *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

These efforts pulled in more than 200 orders. A number of new bookstore accounts were opened, which included several significantly sized orders from bookstores in Black communities. Some 129 libraries ordered 156 copies of the book as a result of meetings with library selectors, book reviews, promotional mailings, conference tables, and advertisements.

The *Workers Power* book is again at the center of the new effort. Volunteers are planning to feature it along with other Pathfinder titles in visits during Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March. Pathfinder's Arabic-language edition of the *Communist Manifesto* will also be of interest to library selectors and some bookstore buyers due to the worldwide attention on events in Tunisia and Egypt.

Orders are already coming in. This points to the exciting potential for continued sales of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; the new title *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution: From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces* by Luis Alfonso Zayas, available in Spanish and English; and a new book from Cuba distributed by Pathfinder, *La victoria estratégica* by Fidel Castro.

"You never know when your work is going to pay off," Susan Berman says of the first order recently netted in Toronto. This week, a year after e-mailing and phone calling for Black History Month 2010, the owner of a bookstore responded with an order for 13 titles (a total of 25 books), including *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power, Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa, and New International* no. 6 with the lead article "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop."

"People who buy Pathfinder books

are always disappointed our store does not have a bigger selection of political titles on hand," remarked the manager of an Atlanta music and Spanish-language bookstore to volunteer Jim Rogers. The store recently sold a copy of *La victoria estratégica* by Fidel Castro and had to reserve two more for customers who want it. The manager placed her first order last July, and has since sold 20 books of 11 different titles, including *Manifiesto comunista, Che Guevara habla a la juventud, Es posible una revolución socialista en Estados Unidos?, La última lucha de Lenin, Playa Girón, and En defensa del marxismo*.

After nine months of continuous work, the Malcolm X branch of the San Diego library system now has all of Pathfinder's Malcolm X titles, and has also bought the *Workers Power* book by Barnes. A discussion has begun with the librarian who agreed to host a special event to discuss the book this spring. Los Angeles-area sales volunteer Nick Castle reports that the visits to San Diego were the high point of their work, including orders and new accounts at a major private college library and a state



Militant/Jim Rogers

Pathfinder books at Discolandia, a music and Spanish-language bookstore in Atlanta.

university bookstore in that city.

From Philadelphia, Mitchel Rosenberg reports that "the most interesting groundbreaking we did was at an internet cafe and money-wiring store oriented to Spanish-speaking immigrants, located in the Italian Market area. The owner, who bought a personal copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* to read her-

self, is now considering a list of books we proposed as an initial order."

Pathfinder salespeople are drawing up plans to help widely circulate *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution*, which provides a firsthand account of the agrarian reform in Cuba and the struggles of workers and peasants in the countryside going back decades before the triumph of the revolution in 1959.

White House plans to renew military tribunals

BY DOUG NELSON

The White House is preparing to restart military tribunals for some detainees at the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, along with an executive order to legitimize indefinite detentions for others, the *New York Times* reported January 19.

In one of his first acts as president in January 2009, Obama pledged to shut down the prison within one year. The administration also halted any new charges against inmates beyond the 29 who had been charged under the previous administration of George W. Bush.

Five prisoners have been convicted under the military tribunal system, three under Bush and two under Obama. The last was Omar Khadr, a Canadian captured in 2002 during a battle in Afghanistan when he was 15 years old. Following a plea bargain, he was sentenced to an additional year in Guantánamo, after which he faces seven more years in a

Canadian prison.

The Obama administration has sought to win congressional support to try some Guantánamo prisoners in civilian U.S. courts, arguing that convictions and harsh sentences could be assured in civilian trials. Broader use of secret evidence and other denials of constitutional protections would also be further established in the U.S. courts.

The administration publicly disregarded presumption of innocence for accused Guantánamo inmates. During a television interview in November 2009 Obama declared that opposition to civilian trials will diminish after Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, then slated for trial, is convicted and put to death. Mohammed is "going to meet his maker," declared White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs several months later.

Charged by a military commission in 2008, some five years after his capture, Mohammed has yet to face either civilian or military trial.

Ahmed Ghailani, the only Guantánamo inmate to be tried in a U.S. court, was sentenced January 25 to life in prison for the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The debate in the U.S. ruling class on civilian versus military trials sharpened after Ghailani's conviction last November in which he was found guilty of only one of the 285 charges against him and the judge blocked testimony from a prosecution witness obtained by torturing Ghailani.

Following Ghailani's conviction, the majority-Democratic Congress moved to block further civilian trials and, as part of a war spending bill, banned the use of federal funds to either transport Guantánamo prisoners to the United States or build a facility to hold them. Obama criticized the restriction when he signed the bill in early January.

Now the White House is planning to allow new cases to be brought to military commissions and has begun working up new procedures for the tribunals, officials told the *Times*. Three detainees

are likely to face tribunals in the near future, including Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, who lawyers say was tortured at secret CIA prisons in Thailand and Poland prior to his transfer to Guantánamo.

The administration is also drafting an executive order that will establish a legal framework for indefinite detentions, affecting some four dozen prisoners.

Currently there are 173 inmates at Guantánamo, 72 fewer than when Obama took office. Dozens slated for trial have been stuck in Guantánamo as politicians haggle over how to best ensure convictions and further undermine constitutional and other legal protections of the accused.

At the same time, many more languish without charges of any kind. Dozens have been "cleared for release" by the Pentagon, including about 30 Yemeni prisoners whose release was blocked by executive order following the Dec. 25, 2009, failed bombing attempt of a U.S. flight by a Nigerian man who was allegedly trained in Yemen. Scores more remain incarcerated simply because no government, including the United States, is willing to take them.

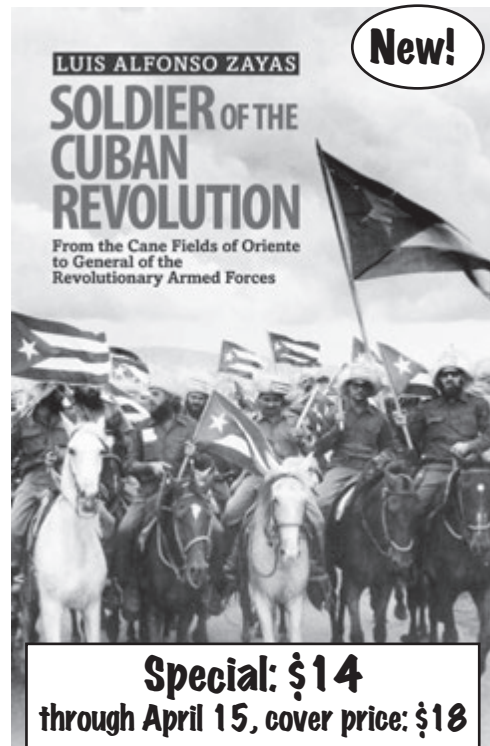
Meanwhile, some 1,400 prisoners are held at the U.S. Parwan detention facility at the military base in Bagram, Afghanistan. Approaching maximum capacity, the prison is being expanded to hold 3,200.

After Washington handed over responsibility for prisoners it held in Iraq to the government there, those without some alleged basis for charges were released. Preparations for handing over responsibility for prisoners to the Afghan government are taking a different course. "If we turned them over to the Afghans tomorrow, they'd be in a position under their laws and their constitution that they may be released," a top official told the *Washington Post*.

The Afghan government is now discussing setting up a legal framework for indefinite detentions ahead of any transfer.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution

From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces



Luis Alfonso Zayas, today a general in the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, recounts his experiences over five decades in the Cuban Revolution. From a teenage combatant in the clandestine struggle and 1956-58 war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship, to serving three times as a leader of the Cuban volunteer forces that helped Angola defeat repeated invasions by the army of white-supremacist South Africa, Zayas tells how he and millions of ordinary men and women in Cuba changed the course of history and, in the process, transformed themselves as well.

PathfinderPress.com

Australia and UK rulers strengthen military ties

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—A top-level meeting of military and government representatives from the United Kingdom and Australia was held here January 18. The strategic dialogue, designed to strengthen military cooperation between the two governments, has been given added impetus from a renewed focus by Washington and its closest allies on their rivalry with China, a growing economic and military power.

In addition to the imperialists' long-term goal to contain the influence of China, the two parties discussed military and intelligence cooperation in the greater Asia-Pacific region, the Afghanistan-Pakistan war, as well as space and cyber warfare.

UK defence secretary Liam Fox as well as British military and intelligence chiefs accompanied Foreign Secretary William Hague. They conferred with their Australian counterparts led by Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and De-

fence Minister Stephen Smith.

The two imperialist allies decided to continue meeting on an annual basis, as the Australian government does with Washington, its chief ally. Canberra also has bilateral strategic conferences with Tokyo, and plans to do so with the Indonesian government.

The January 18 meeting was held shortly after the Chinese military deployed the world's first antiship ballistic missile designed to counter Washington's naval power and conducted a test of its prototype stealth fighter jet, both examples of Beijing's rapidly advancing arsenal. By most estimates China's military expenditure is second only to the United States.

Hague, the first British foreign secretary to visit here in 17 years, called Australia "a major player in a region of great importance to our collective security, with powerful links with China." He cited Australia's continuing mineral export boom, which has made China its largest trading partner.



British capital is now the largest foreign investor in Australia through the expansion of Anglo-Australian mining corporations BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto.

The British foreign secretary said these renewed links to Australia, as well as New Zealand, were part of a "decisive" shift in focus from Europe

"to the east and to the south." As part of carrying this out, he said, British forces need to become more "expeditionary and agile." Hague also raised the idea of trying to "reinvigorate" the Commonwealth, the association of imperialist and semicolonial countries formerly part of the British Empire. This includes India and Pakistan, the latter of which was created by the bloody division of India orchestrated by British imperialism after World War II.

Washington has been working toward establishing a détente between New Delhi and Islamabad as part of deepening its alliance with both. Its growing influence on the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan is part of an effort to cement alliances in the broader region as a counterweight to China.

Hague emphasized the continued importance of London's alliances in Europe and its special relationship with Washington.

The Australian government is boosting arms expenditure in an effort to offset China's growing power in the region. Canberra plans to spend more than US\$50 billion over the next two decades on projects that include new air warfare destroyers, submarines, frigates, amphibious assault ships, and 100 radar-evading U.S.-built F-35 joint strike fighters.

Two mine blasts kill 26 workers in Colombia

BY SETH GALINSKY

At least 26 workers were killed recently in two coal mine explosions in Colombia less than a week apart. This follows 173 miners who died there in 2010, a record number. More than 530 miners have been killed in Colombia in the last seven years. The deaths come as bosses have more than doubled coal production in the past decade—putting profits above miners' lives.

In the latest explosion five miners died February 1 at La Escondida mine in the state of Cundinamarca, north of Bogotá. Daniel Mendoza, a lawyer for the miners and their relatives, told the media that a power outage the day before left the mine without ventilation. But the company ordered miners to work the day after the power was restored without first ventilating the mine.

On January 26 a methane gas explosion killed 21 miners at La Preciosa (the precious) mine near the Venezuelan border. According to *El Espectador*, the funeral for the miners was attended by thousands of working people from the surrounding mountain region. At the cemetery Sara Velosa, wife of Nelson Velosa, one of the dead miners, shouted out,

"Close the mine. It's not precious, it's the death mine."

A miner interviewed by Colombian television said that several hours before the blast, monitors showed dangerous concentrations of methane gas, but supervisors ordered miners to keep working. Asked why the miners didn't leave, he replied, "The company suspends us if we leave the mine without their permission."

The rescue effort was delayed in part because "there weren't even any stretchers to get the wounded out," another miner told the press.

This is not the first mine explosion at La Preciosa, which employed 110 workers. In 2007 a similar explosion killed 31 miners there. The government allowed the company to rapidly reopen the mine.

Colombia is the largest coal producer in Latin America and the fifth largest exporter in the world after Indonesia, Australia, Russia, and South Africa. Colombia also has the largest open-pit mine in the world, El Cerrejón, owned by foreign corporations.

Some 298,000 miners work at 6,000 mines that operate with government permits and another 3,000 "illegal mines" that often use antiquated machinery and equipment. There are

only 16 government mine inspectors for the entire country. Both La Escondida and La Preciosa had operating permits.

La Preciosa is reportedly owned by a Colombian capitalist. U.S.-based Drummond Corporation, Switzerland-based Glencore International, Australian-based BHP Billiton Ltd, and Swiss-based Xstrata PLC dominate the export of Colombian coal. Coal prices have risen more than 60 percent since 2004 when the Colombian government closed the state-owned coal company and instead encouraged private investment.

Meanwhile, unionists at the El Cerrejón open-pit coal mine voted to authorize a strike after negotiations broke down January 27. Workers are demanding a 9 percent wage increase.

New International MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

In issue 7 (\$14)

Opening Guns of World War III explains how the murderous assault on Iraq in 1990–91 heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. **1945: When U.S. Troops Said 'No!'** tells the hidden story of the GI revolt at the end of World War II, when U.S. troops refused to allow themselves to be used to crush spreading anticolonial struggles. Other articles discuss the roots of the militarization drive Washington set in motion at the end of the 1970s.

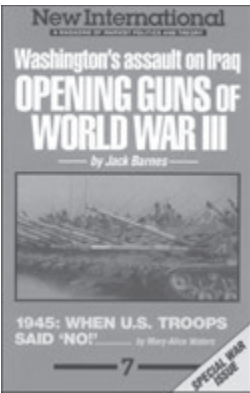
In issue 14 (\$14)

Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X discusses how, in the imperialist epoch, revolutionary leadership of the highest political capacity, courage, and integrity, as exemplified by the last year of Malcolm's life, converges with communism. **Setting the Record Straight on Fascism and World War II: Building a World Federation of Democratic Youth that Fights Imperialism and War** dissects the lie that World War II was a war for "democracy" and explains the worldwide class conflicts involved. Two other articles take up the roots of the 2008 world financial crisis and why, under capitalism, labor is organized in a way that undermines both nature and the worker—the source of all wealth and culture.

Available from Pathfinderpress.com



Miners outside La Preciosa (the precious) mine in Colombia after a methane gas explosion killed 21 miners on January 26. A blast at another mine a week later killed five other miners.



Actions across the globe back struggle in Egypt

BY SETH GALINSKY

Demonstrations in solidarity with the massive protests in Egypt against the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak are taking place around the United States and the world.

Some 1,200 people gathered outside the United Nations in New York January 29 carrying signs in English and Arabic. One sign read, “Bread, Freedom, Dignity.”

“This is coming from the people,” demonstrator Ahmed Soliman told the press. “I left Egypt 18 years ago, and I have been dreaming of this day since then.” The day before about 60 people demonstrated in a neighborhood of Astoria, Queens, known by many as “Little Cairo.”

More than 500 people marched in downtown San Francisco January 29. Demonstrators came from throughout the region. Many chanted in Arabic, “We don’t want Mubarak, we don’t want Suleiman. It’s not the person, it’s the system.” Omar Suleiman, head of Egypt’s spying operations, was named vice president by Mubarak in an attempt to cling to power in the face of growing opposition to his rule.

In Boston, hundreds marched from Cambridge’s Harvard Square to downtown Boston. “This is the beginning of the end” of the Mubarak regime, said Fatma Naib, who was born in Eritrea but grew up in Egypt. “We are looking forward to a new Egypt.”

One group of youth chanted in Arabic, “No cell phones, no Facebook, no TV—we will still communicate.”

Egyptian-born Adam Suly said, “The U.S. is sending tear gas to Egypt, the same tear gas used by the police to support the regime.”

Buchanuddin Alawali, from Bahrain who is currently a student at Northeastern University, joined the march to show “total support for human rights and in opposition to tyranny.”

“This is a chance to bring the tyrant down,” said Hisham Hegazy, an Egyptian immigrant who runs a taxi

and limousine business.

The Egyptian Student Association held a rally at Iowa State University in Ames January 29. One of the signs carried by some 75 students and professors was a row of pictures of Mubarak next to every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan to show his close relationship with Washington and the large U.S. aid his government has received.

“Brick by brick, wall by wall, we will make Mubarak fall!” was chanted in English and Arabic at a protest in front of the Egyptian Consulate in Chicago. Called by the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, participants included Arab-Americans and immigrants from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and Palestine who live in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan.

Young Egyptians led chants at a rally of 100 people in Auckland, New



Militant/Eric Simpson

More than 500 march in San Francisco January 29 in solidarity with struggle in Egypt to overturn Mubarak dictatorship. Popular chant was, “It’s not the person, it’s the system.”

Zealand. “Protest is not a privilege, it is our right. Our voices are meant to be heard,” said rally chair Mohamed Hassan. The action was sponsored by Students for Justice in Palestine and Global Peace and Justice Auckland.

Eric Simpson in San Francisco; Helen Meyers in Des Moines, Iowa; Laura Anderson in Chicago; Patrick Brown in Auckland, New Zealand; and Laura Garza in Boston contributed to this article.

Mass protests shake dictatorship in Egypt

Continued from front page

try. Although it is rich in oil, natural gas, cotton, and other resources, not to mention the revenues from the Suez Canal, 40 percent of Egyptians subsist on about \$2 a day. Official unemployment reached 9.4 percent in 2009.

The Hosni Mubarak regime has ruled Egypt with an iron grip for 30 years. In 1981 the government imposed an emergency law that empowers the police to detain people indefinitely without charges, keeps a tight control over freedom of the press and assembly, and sets up “security” courts for trials. The only trade union federation permitted is one dominated by the government.

Hatred for the repressive conditions, particularly among youth, and determination by workers to halt their declining standard of living has been building up in recent years. From 2004 to 2008 about 1.7 million workers went on strike or carried out some other protest, particularly in the textile industry,

according to the *New York Times*.

The massive demonstrations in nearby Tunisia that forced that country’s president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, to flee gave an impetus to the revolt in Egypt. A call for a mass demonstration against Mubarak January 25 in Tahrir Square in Cairo, turned out tens of thousands, who were attacked by the security police. Despite a curfew, people from many walks of life continued to pour into the streets.

In the face of police bullets, water cannons, and tear gas, demonstrators continued to protest. “In one of many astonishing scenes Friday [January

28], thousands of anti-government protesters wielding rocks, glass, and sticks chased hundreds of riot police away from the main square in downtown Cairo,” reported Associated Press.

In the port city of Suez, a center for steel mills and textile plants, some of the most combative fighting with the cops took place. In a two-hour battle demonstrators took over the police station, destroyed cop vehicles, seized weapons, and set free prisoners in jail. Police fled.

“The protests have been distinctly secular,” the *Washington Post* noted, saying, “Those involved in organizing

Continued on next page



Militant/Joanne Holowchak

Toronto protest against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak January 29

Education for Socialists Bulletin

The Workers and Farmers Government

by Joseph Hansen

Includes

“Nasser’s Egypt—On the way to a workers state?”

Writing in 1965 Hansen explains the class character of the Gamal Abdul Nasser regime, which ruled Egypt from 1954 to 1970. The state bureaucracy used nationalization of industry to advance a new capitalist class that included parts of the army officer corps. Even though some called the regime socialist, Hansen explains, there was no working-class mobilization in the takeover of industries and the “land reform” left 80 percent of peasants with little or no land.

Also includes chapters on Algeria, China, and Cuba.



New International magazine of Marxist politics and theory

Issue number 12 includes

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today’s sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

www.PathfinderPress.com

Washington has backed Mubarak for decades

BY ANGEL LARISCY

For decades Washington has relied on repressive capitalist regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, and other countries in the Middle East and northern Africa to maintain “stability” and the free flow of oil to U.S. energy monopolies. Today, the U.S. government has adopted the posture of defender of the rights of working people in those countries.

After massive demonstrations by workers and youth in Tunisia forced hated dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to flee January 14, Egyptians took to the streets in similar protests to demand President Hosni Mubarak resign.

Both Ben Ali and Mubarak are longtime allies of the U.S. government. They sought to use their relationships with Washington to enrich themselves in return for helping it police the region.

Egypt, ruled by Mubarak for 30 years, has been the recipient of \$1.5 billion in direct U.S. government aid an-

nually—\$1.3 billion used for military purposes to help keep the regime in power. Cairo receives the fourth largest amount doled out by Washington to governments around the world. Since 1975 the U.S. Agency for International Development has also given Egypt more than \$28 billion in economic assistance. The country is the largest market for U.S. wheat sales, averaging \$2 billion per year.

The U.S. government gave the Tunisian government close to \$350 million in military aid between 1987 and 2009. While a 2009 cable from the U.S. Embassy described Tunisia as “a police state with little freedom of expression or association, and serious human rights problems,” the State Department praised the active collaboration between Tunisian security forces and Washington.

The Egyptian armed forces supplied 35,000 troops in Washington’s 1990–91 war against Iraq, the third-largest



White House/Pete Souza

President Barack Obama meets with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in Oval Office of White House, Sept. 1, 2010.

contingent after the United States and the United Kingdom. Egypt was the first Arab country to recognize the state of Israel and collaborates with it on security along the Israeli-Egyptian border against the Palestinian people.

The CIA works closely with the Egyptian government on rendition—a

covert program expanded during the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan in which the CIA sent captured “terror” suspects to third countries to be interrogated under torture. Egypt has been a willing partner. Mubarak’s newly appointed vice president, Omar Suleiman, was the CIA’s point man for the program in Egypt. He underwent training in the 1980s at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School and Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

On January 25 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the administration was confident the Mubarak regime was “stable” and “responding to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people.”

Two days later Vice President Joseph Biden said on PBS NewsHour that “Mubarak’s been an ally of ours in a number of things and he’s been very responsible relative to geopolitical interests in the region. . . . I would not refer to him as a dictator.”

Days later, after no letup in the demonstrations in Egypt, the Barack Obama administration urged a transition to “free” elections.

In March 2009, in her first visit to Egypt as secretary of state, Clinton rebuffed suggestions that Mubarak should not visit the White House because of his record on human rights. “I really consider President and Mrs. Mubarak to be friends of my family,” she said. “So I hope to see him often here in Egypt and in the United States.”

Mass protests shake dictatorship in Egypt

Continued from page 8

the protests say they hope their movement to oust Mubarak is not overtaken by a group that has said it wants to bring Islamic law to Egypt but is widely suspected of occasional complicity with the government,” a reference to the Muslim Brotherhood.

The largest Islamist organization in the country, the Muslim Brotherhood refused to join the first demonstrations calling for Mubarak to resign. Secular bourgeois parties were likewise slow to join the actions.

When opposition parties organize protests, university student Mohammad Hassan told the *Post*, “they ask for a change to the constitution or a new minimum wage. We’re asking for something different: We want the regime to leave.”

History of recent strikes

Many involved in the protests point to struggles in recent years, including the April 2008 strike of more than 27,000 textile workers in the city of Mahalla al-Kubra where cops killed three strikers, and protests against the police killing of a young Egyptian, Khaled Said, this past August. One group leading the current demonstrations calls itself the April 6 Youth Movement, marking the date the Egyptian government crushed the textile workers’ strike. The group has remained active in fighting for democratic rights.

In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Amal Sharaf, a founder of the April 6 Youth Movement, said her group’s goals were an end to emergency rule, a transition to a new president who is neither Mubarak nor his son, and steps to combat low wages and rising prices. The group organized a welcome for capitalist politician Mohamed ElBaradei in February 2010 when he returned to Egypt after many years abroad.

ElBaradei, who served in the Egyptian diplomatic corps and most recently headed the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, has been putting himself forward as an alternative to Mubarak.

On the evening of January 28, the

government took the police off the streets of major cities, replacing them with the army. Mubarak announced he was firing his cabinet and appointing a new one. Crowds responded by burning down the Cairo headquarters of his National Democratic Party. Today in Cairo’s central square stands a burned-out police car topped with a sign reading, “New Headquarters of the New Democratic Party.”

The next day Mubarak appointed the long-time head of the secret police, Omar Suleiman, vice president and Ahmed Shafiq, a former Air Force commander, prime minister. Meanwhile, Mubarak’s son Gamal, considered to be his successor, fled to London.

Demonstrators January 30 chanted, “Hosni Mubarak, Omar Suleiman, both of you are agents of the Americans.”

The press has given a lot of attention to acts of vandalism and break-ins at cultural institutions and homes of wealthy Egyptians. In the absence of the police, protesters began organizing popular committees to maintain order, apprehend the thugs, protect hospitals, and direct traffic. They also checked IDs at Tahrir Square to make sure plainclothes cops did not get in. As they captured some of the hooligans, they discovered a large number of them to be in the employ of the Interior Ministry.

Role of army

In some cases the popular committees have worked directly with the army. The Egyptian army is a draftee one heavily reliant on recruits from workers and farmers. Many soldiers are sympathetic to the demonstrators, allowing them to scrawl anti-Mubarak slogans on their tanks.

Late on February 1, after the largest demonstrations to date demanding his removal, Mubarak announced that he would remain in office, offering only the concession that he would not run for president again. The army high command made clear where it stood on February 2 when it declared, “The armed forces call on the protesters to go home for the sake of bringing back stability.”

That same day thousands of pro-Mubarak thugs, some brandishing whips, were unleashed on the anti-Mubarak demonstrators in Tahrir Square. Antigovernment protesters stood their ground chanting “Down with Mubarak!” The many soldiers stationed in the square did not move to restrain the thugs, the *Washington Post* reported.

The U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Margaret Scobey, telephoned ElBaradei to urge him to “engage in meaningful dialogue” with the Egyptian government.

ElBaradei had called the White House proposal for a transition in power with September elections a “farce.” “The American government cannot ask the Egyptian people to believe that a dictator who has been in power for 30 years will be the one to implement democracy,” he said January 30. Several bourgeois opposition parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, announced that day that they favor ElBaradei leading an interim government.

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Communists in 1920s confront world capitalist crisis

Below is an excerpt from the first volume of The First Five Years of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. The Communist International was founded in 1919 at the initiative of V.I. Lenin, Trotsky, and other central leaders of the Bolshevik Party to build a world movement of communist parties to lead workers and peasants to overthrow capitalist exploitation and colonial oppression. The report below on the world economic crisis coming out of World War I—the first imperialist slaughter—and the tasks of the International was presented by Trotsky at the Third Congress in June 1921. Copyright © 1945, 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

With the imperialist war we entered the epoch of revolution, that is, the epoch when the very mainstays of capitalist equilibrium are shaking and col-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

lapsing. Capitalist equilibrium is an extremely complex phenomenon. Capitalism produces this equilibrium, disrupts it, restores it anew in order to disrupt it anew, concurrently extending the limits of its domination. In the economic sphere these constant disruptions and restorations of the equilibrium take the



Delegates to Third Congress of the Communist International in Moscow at welcoming parade, June 1921. Leon Trotsky, organizer of Red Army (in uniform) is at front, center.

shape of crises and booms. In the sphere of inter-class relations the disruption of equilibrium assumes the form of strikes, lockouts, revolutionary struggle. In the sphere of interstate relations the disruption of equilibrium means war or—in a weaker form—tariff war, economic war, or blockade. Capitalism thus possesses a dynamic equilibrium, one which is always in the process of either disruption or restoration. But at the same time this equilibrium has a great power of resistance, the best proof of which is the fact that the capitalist world has not toppled to this day.

The last imperialist war was an event which we rightfully appraised as a colossal blow, unequaled in history, to the equilibrium of the capitalist world. Out of the war has actually risen the epoch of the greatest mass movements and revolutionary battles. Russia, the weakest link in the capitalist chain, was the first to lose her equilibrium and the first to enter the road of revolution in 1917—in the month of February. Our February Revolution had great repercussions among the working masses of England. 1917 in England was the year of the greatest strike struggles through which the English proletariat succeeded in checking the war-produced process of declining living conditions among the toiling masses. In October 1917 the working class of Russia took power. Strike struggles extended throughout the entire capitalist world, beginning with the neutral countries. In the autumn of 1918 Japan passed through a zone of tumultuous “rice” disorders, which according

to some figures involved upwards of 25 percent of the population and which were met with cruel repressions on the part of the Mikado’s government. In January 1918, mass strikes took place in Germany. Toward the end of 1918, following the collapse of German militarism, revolutions took place in Germany and Austria-Hungary. The revolutionary movement keeps expanding. The most critical year for capitalism—at any rate for European capitalism—arrives: the year 1919. In March 1919 a Soviet Republic is formed in Hungary. In January and March 1919 fierce battles between the revolutionary workers and the bourgeois republic break out in Germany. In France there is tension in the atmosphere during the period of demobilization, but the illusions of victory and the hopes for its golden fruits still remain too strong; the struggle does not even begin to approximate here the proportions it assumes in the conquered countries. In the United States toward the end of 1919 the strikes acquire a mighty sweep, embracing the railway workers, the miners, the steel workers, etc. Wilson’s government unleashes wild repressions against the working class. . . .

That the revolution hasn’t taken place to this very day throughout the world, or at least in Europe, does not at all signify “the bankruptcy of the Communist International,” for the program of the Comintern is not based on astronomical data. Every Communist who has to any measure thought out his ideas understands this. But inasmuch as the revolution has not come hot on the tracks of

war, it is absolutely self-evident that the bourgeoisie has utilized the breathing space afforded it, if not to surmount and eliminate the most frightful and terrible consequences of the war, then at least to camouflage them, patch them up, etc., etc. Has it succeeded in accomplishing this? In part, yes. To what extent? It is here that we touch the essence of the question which involves the restoration of capitalist equilibrium. . . .

At the given moment capitalism has entered a period of prolonged and profound depression. Strictly speaking, this epoch should have set in—insofar as one can prophesy about the past—as far back as 1913 when the world market as a result of 20 years of turbulent development had already become inadequate for the development of German, English and North American capitalism. These giants of capitalist development took it fully into account. They said to themselves: In order to avoid this depression which will linger for many years, we shall create an acute war crisis, destroy our rival and gain unchallenged domination over the world market that has become too constricted. But the war lasted far too long, provoking not only an acute crisis but a protracted one; it destroyed completely Europe’s capitalist economic apparatus, thereby facilitating America’s feverish development. But after exhausting Europe, the war led in the long run to a great crisis in America, too. Once again we are witnessing that selfsame depression which they had sought to escape, but which has been intensified many-fold owing to Europe’s impoverishment. . . .

On the basis of this economic depression the bourgeoisie will be compelled to exert stronger and stronger pressure upon the working class. This is already to be seen in the cutting of wages which has started in the full-blooded capitalist countries: in America and in England, and then throughout all of Europe. This leads to great struggles over wages. Our task is to extend these struggles, by basing ourselves on a clear understanding of the economic situation. . . . Many comrades say that if an improvement takes place in this epoch it would be fatal for our revolution. No, under no circumstances. In general, there is no automatic dependence of the proletarian revolutionary movement upon a crisis. There is only a dialectical interaction. It is essential to understand this.

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Solidarity with workers of Egypt

The antigovernment protests sweeping a number of countries in the Arab world are the inevitable response to the capitalist crisis, as workers, peasants, and youth demand relief from unemployment, high prices, and government repression by authoritarian regimes unable to offer any future.

The capitalist government of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, like his counterparts in other parts of the world, is completely dependent on Washington and London for its survival. It is incapable of leading any course out of the unequal trade, plunder of resources, and superexploitation of labor that defines Egypt's relations with these imperialist powers. Lacking popular support, the regime's only response is armed might.

U.S. President Barack Obama said February 1 that he defends "the rights of the Egyptian people to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech," and "free and fair elections." Addressing himself to the "people of Egypt, particularly the young people of Egypt," he said, "We hear your voices." But in response to their insistent demand that Mubarak step

down now, he calls for "an orderly transition" in the regime.

U.S. workers should stand in solidarity with the anti-Mubarak protesters—"U.S. hands off!" Washington has no right to decide anything about the future of Egypt.

The working class is coming onto the scene through the unfolding battles in the Arab world. Space is opening up to organize, debate, be active in politics, and link up with other workers worldwide. Whatever the immediate outcome, the capitalist regimes there can no longer simply deny all freedom of speech, assembly, and press. Working people have gotten a taste of their power when united in action. They can move confidently on from here.

No revolutionary, working-class parties exist in either Tunisia or Egypt today. But it's through mass struggles that break the shackles of intimidation and fear erected by these dictatorships that workers can begin to forge a leadership of their own and a course toward the fight for power.

Tunisia gov't fails to quell protests

Continued from front page

demanding Ghannouchi resign. That same day workers in Sidi Bousid, where the protests against Ben Ali began, held a one-day general strike. Strikers chanted, "Kick out the corrupt ones." Similar rallies were held in Mahdia, Thala, Kasserine, and Selian, according to the Tunisian daily *Le Temps*.

Workers around the country are organizing unions, often outside the structures of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), the only legal union federation during the dictatorship. The federation at first opposed but then joined the demonstrations that led to Ben Ali's overthrow.

While the national UGTT leaders have not accepted positions in the cabinet, they are supporting Ghannouchi. UGTT official Abed Briki told *El Pais* that "now is not the time to remove the directors of government bodies because we need to preserve stability."

Le Temps reports that construction workers demonstrated outside the Tunisian national television offices in Tunis carrying signs demanding a wage increase, the right to social security coverage, and the right to organize a union.

Hundreds of deaf and hearing-impaired people demonstrated January 27 demanding the creation of special schools for the deaf and public accommodations to meet their needs.

The following day riot police used tear gas to

clear out the 24-hour sit-in in front of Ghannouchi's office that had been demanding his resignation. The protesters came to the capital as part of a "liberation caravan" that traveled from the central part of the country the week before.

The government has tried to gain support from middle class forces, appealing to fears about social and economic instability. Shopkeeper Choukri Benzekri told Reuters he had confidence in the transitional government. "We waited 23 years," he said. "We can wait six months for this government to organize an election."

But the protests continue, taking on more and more social questions. On January 29 women marched through Tunis to demand equal rights. Several hundred people also marched in the capital the previous day demanding freedom of religion and the repeal of anti-terrorism laws.

More than 1 million Tunisians live outside the country because of the lack of jobs in Tunisia. In spite of one of the highest per capita incomes in the Arab world, unemployment among youth is as high as 40 percent.

Solidarity demonstrations with the Tunisian people have taken place around the world, including in Geneva, Paris, Ottawa, and New York. In Tunis protesters gathered outside the Egyptian embassy backing the struggle in Egypt for the overthrow of the Hosni Mubarak regime.

LETTERS

Workers in Swaziland

I have just read disturbing news that some U.S. politicians think they can solve the economic crisis at the expense of the workers of the United States. I am young worker in Swaziland and a leader of the Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO). Our country is faced with the same problems Americans and other workers in the world are facing.

The government of the Kingdom of Swaziland on the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is planning to lay off 10,000 workers. The government is also privatizing state-owned enterprises, which provide basic necessities like water and electricity.

Sixty-nine percent of the population lives below the poverty line and the majority of them do not have access to these services. Putting this service into the hands of private owners will make it even harder to

access this service. We're calling on workers of the world to unite and fight this evil agent of the imperialist master of the West.

We are calling on the workers of the world to assist us as we fight the oppressive regime of Mswati III, which continues suppress dissenting voices in Swaziland. As I write this letter the president of SWAYOCO is languishing in jail detained by Mswati's police.

Sifiso Mabuza
by e-mail

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21st century communication

The *Militant* quotes Ziad Mhersi about the events in Tunisia saying, "It's not a Facebook revolution. Definitely not. People went into the streets, people died, people demonstrated."

At the same time, I do believe that the efficiency and social power of 21st century electronic communication can be a tool in the hands of the working class and all defenders of meaningful human rights and democracy.

B.F.
Peekskill, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Public workers

Continued from front page

up to 10 percent and 5 percent respectively.

In addition to slashing the workforce, the capitalist rulers are taking aim at social programs vital to working people, with funds for education and health care taking the hardest hits.

Governors from both the Democratic and Republican parties are planning "bone-deep cuts" to Medicaid, a program that provides health care for people with low income, notes the *New York Times*. Arizona governor Janice Brewer, a Republican, is seeking to remove 280,000 adults from the program. In California, newly elected governor Edmund Brown, a Democrat, is proposing to save money by limiting the number of doctor visits allowed in a year along with limits on prescriptions each month. South Carolina officials want to eliminate hospice care.

In New York, the Cuomo administration is proposing \$2.85 billion in Medicaid cuts, including slashing programs for those suffering from severe mental illnesses and drug problems. This figure will likely double with the loss of federal matching funds. A projected \$1 billion cut in state education funds for New York City will eliminate more than 21,000 jobs. Mayor Michael Bloomberg is pressing to gut union-won seniority rights as these layoffs are carried out.

Bankruptcy option for states

Under the U.S. Constitution, states cannot declare bankruptcy. Since the 1930s some cities and counties have had this option.

Bankruptcy laws have been used by corporations to gut wages and benefits won by workers while ensuring the wealthy owners of debt get paid. When General Motors declared bankruptcy in 2009 it secured billions of dollars in federal bailout funds. Through concessions from the union it now has fewer workers, a two-tier wage for new hires, and in some cases wages for long-time workers cut in half.

Among those leading the effort for the state bankruptcy option is former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. A January 27 *Los Angeles Times* column he authored with former Florida governor John Bush argues that this would allow states "to reorganize their finances free from their union contractual obligations," allowing states "to terminate some, all or none of its government employee union contracts and establish new compensation rates, work rules."

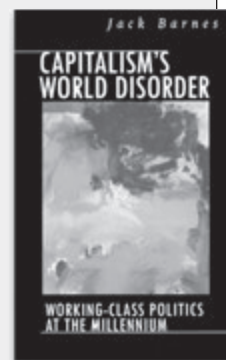
House Majority Leader Eric Cantor says he opposes changing the law allowing states to go bankrupt. At the same time, he emphasized, "There will not be a federal bailout of the states."

Without declaring bankruptcy state officials "already have options for putting the squeeze on their unions" with mass layoffs, wage freezes, and involuntary furloughs, said a January 24 *Wall Street Journal* column by E.J. McMahon of the Manhattan Institute. He argues that state bankruptcies "could create more problems than it solves."

As workers' wages and benefits are being cut, bondholders still get paid. New York "has a trustee that intercepts tax revenues and makes some bond payments before the state can get to the money," reports the *New York Times*. California has a similar "continuous appropriation" for debt payments, guaranteeing bondholders get interest payments regardless of budget deficits.

New York will have about \$54.3 billion in debt at the end of this fiscal year on March 31. That's up from \$14.4 billion in 1990.

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